

Dear Friends,

Every day, libraries in big cities and small towns, colleges and universities, in schools and in businesses help transform their communities. The library is a place where people of all backgrounds can come together for community meetings, lectures and programs, to do research with the assistance of a trained professional, or to find homework help.

This coming week (April 13-19) is National Library Week, a time to celebrate the contributions of libraries, librarians, and library workers in schools, campuses, and communities. The observance also provides an opportunity for citizens to discover what services libraries have to offer.

In conjunction with National Library Week, many school library media programs also celebrate the month of April as School Library Media Month.

I am proud of the integral role that our library media specialists across South Carolina are playing in our public schools and the support that the South Carolina Department of Education provides them. We are committed to advocating for high quality school library media programs. Our school media consultant also serves as a liaison to other groups and organizations working toward excellence in education.

The Department's Web site provides a wealth of information for educators, students, and parents. In addition to links to popular resources, the site contains suggested reading lists for each school level: high school, middle, and elementary.

Last year, our Department launched an initiative called the "No Book Left Unread Summer Reading Challenge." This program's purpose is to encourage recreational reading over the summer by students, faculty, and staff. In 2007, participants read a total of 1,551,157 pages. Our goal this summer is 2,000,000 pages. Hopefully, we'll surpass that!

Reading is so important to success in school and in life. Let's make it a lifelong habit. Join the circle of knowledge at your school or community library.

Sincerely,

Jim Rex
State Superintendent of Education